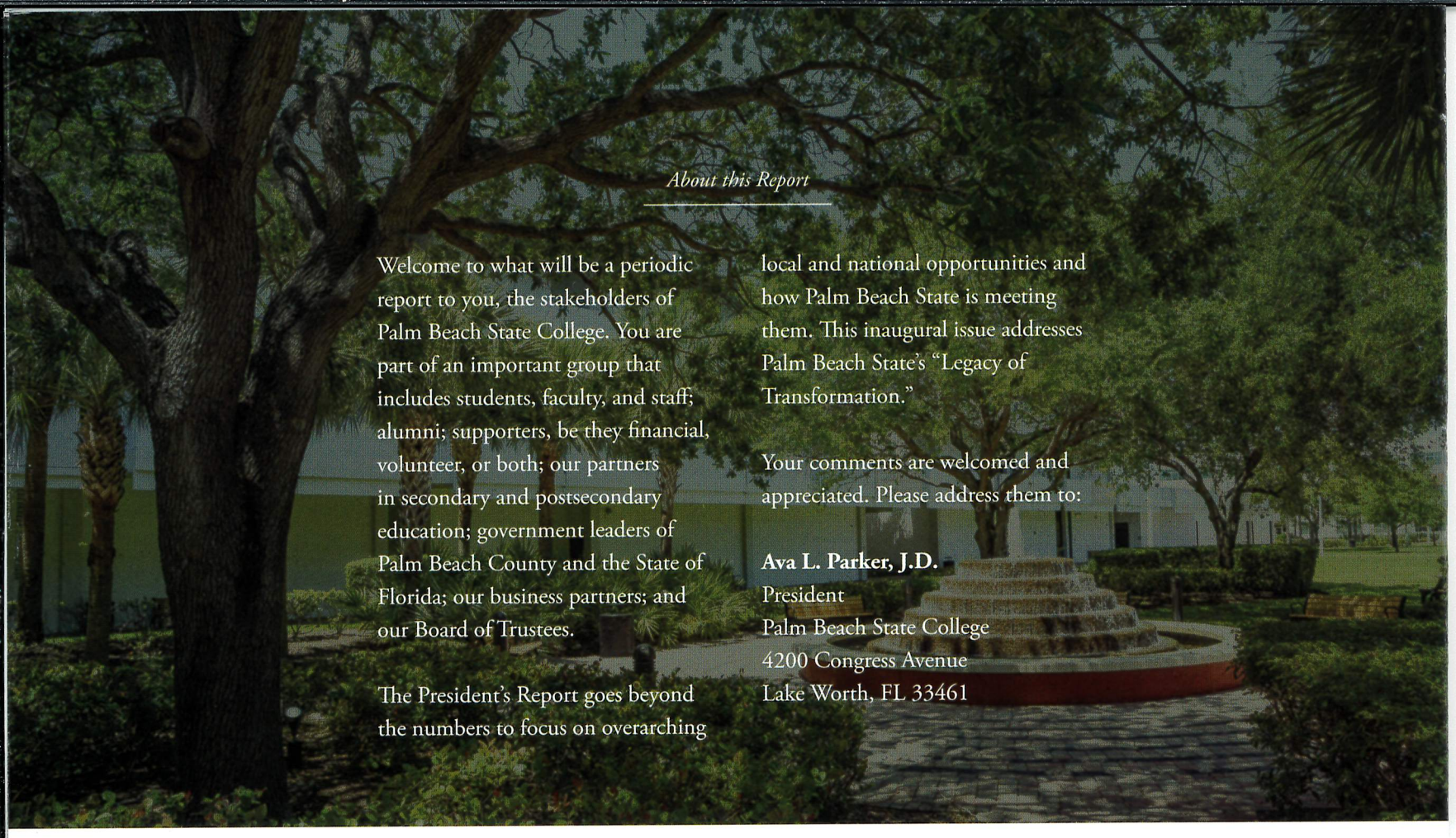
PALM BEACH STATE COLLEGE

# 2021 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

**The Community's College:**
**Reflecting on Palm Beach State's**

# LEGACY OF TRANSFORMATION



*About this Report*

Welcome to what will be a periodic report to you, the stakeholders of Palm Beach State College. You are part of an important group that includes students, faculty, and staff; alumni; supporters, be they financial, volunteer, or both; our partners in secondary and postsecondary education; government leaders of Palm Beach County and the State of Florida; our business partners; and our Board of Trustees.

The President's Report goes beyond the numbers to focus on overarching local and national opportunities and how Palm Beach State is meeting them. This inaugural issue addresses Palm Beach State's "Legacy of Transformation."

Your comments are welcomed and appreciated. Please address them to:

**Ava L. Parker, J.D.**
President
Palm Beach State College
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# EDUCATION
## is Important

**Dr. Ava Parker**
President

Every day at Palm Beach State College, we celebrate the positive statistics that align with education, from a robust economy, to the economic impact of our students. Those statistics represent the positive societal outcomes associated with education. This President's Report focuses on the importance and impact of education on the individual.

Quality Education inspires hope, advances skills, and transforms lives. Not because education tells us what to think, but because a quality education allows us to think - to dream - and to accomplish.

On our Lake Worth campus, we have a courtyard outfitted with outdoor tables and benches. When I walk through the courtyard, I marvel at the potential, energy and excitement of our students. Even in this year of limited in-person learning, it is impossible to dampen the energy fueled by the dreams and expectations of each of these young people and the certainty in the future that they bring with them to Palm Beach State College.

Linda Johnson Rice said, "We've been here so long. The history and richness runs so deep within the community. We own this. It's personal. It's very personal."

This quote is meaningful on so many levels. This first President's Report focuses on inclusion. Palm Beach State College has been working to forge equity in our community since 1965, when we merged with Roosevelt Junior College. Our students, educators and staff benefit from this richness of experience. It is impossible, as you read the stories of the work and impact of our educators, alumni and current students, not to feel the energy and the impact of their work – and to understand that, "We've been here so long. The history and richness runs so deep within the community. We own this. It's personal. It's very personal."

We are Palm Beach State. We are The Community's College – and yes, We own this. It's personal, very personal. Enjoy!

**Founded During the Great Depression, Enduring World & Regional Wars, the Turbulent '60s, the Rise of the Dot Com Era, & the Coronavirus Pandemic,**

# PALM BEACH STATE IS LIVING ITS LEGACY OF TRANSFORMATION

When forty-one students started night classes at Florida's first community college in an unassuming building by Palm Beach High School in 1933, little did they know they were making history. They were just thrilled to be able to continue their education close to home. Nor, most likely, did they know that their professors were actually teachers from the high school, working overtime without extra pay due to depression-era budgets.

Back then, no one could have imagined 88 years down the road to today's Palm Beach State—the largest institution of higher learning in Palm Beach County with 47,000 students on five regional campuses.

It has not been an easy path for what was then known as Palm Beach Junior College. Enduring four location changes, including space so cramped in the Lake Park Town Hall that students had to be turned away and chemistry classes were taught in the jail, the college finally found a permanent home in 1956, when the 114-acre Lake Worth campus was created. Student population boomed at the spacious all-White institution, renamed Palm Beach Community College.

Back in the day, African American students had limited opportunities to continue their education beyond segregated high schools, and colleges such as Florida Memorial and Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU). "These folks were place-bound, didn't have the financial means to leave home," explained Dr. Dennis Gallon, president emeritus of Palm Beach State. "And because of the shortcomings of 'separate but equal' public schools, most were not academically ready to be thrust into four-year college," he added.

But times were changing. In 1958, Palm Beach County's African American community rallied together with Roosevelt High School (RHS) Principal Britton G. Sayles, creating Roosevelt Junior College (RJC). Black students finally had a path to higher education. First year classes were held at night in the high school; Britton Sayles, as principal of RHS and president of RJC, worked double shifts. Over its seven-year history, the college grew in stature, size, and space, gaining accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, membership in the American Association of Junior Colleges, and, said Dr. Gallon, "great pride of accomplishment and can-do spirit within the Black community." But there were still great gaps in funding and resources for Black schools.

The first small steps toward equity for African American students came with the national Civil Rights Act of 1964. But the early steps were painful for students, faculty, and staff at Roosevelt Junior College. Palm Beach County's Board of Public Education shut down the college and transferred its students and a few of its teachers to Palm Beach Junior College. Britton Sayles wasn't able to follow his students—he was moved to an administrative post at the school board.

The African American community was heartbroken to have its junior college closed, pain still deeply felt when Dr. Gallon was named president of PBJC in 1997. Thanks to gracious help from Mr. Sayles' widow and former Roosevelt Junior College students, including Mrs. Bettye Dawson, Dr. Gallon felt their pain and took immediate steps to rectify their feelings of abandonment. Today, the rich heritage of Roosevelt Junior College is celebrated as an integral part of Palm Beach State's legacy of transformation.

***"The lessons learned from the 1965 'merger' of Roosevelt Junior College with Palm Beach State College (then Palm Beach Junior College) provides guidance on how to improve the retention rates for today's Black and Hispanic students. To achieve their full potential, all students should feel not just accepted, but wanted at the college. It is beneficial for the educator to get to know the whole person and to make a concerted effort to understand and appreciate the individuality of each student's learning preference."***

**DENNIS P. GALLON, PH. D.**
*President Emeritus*

# TRANSFORMING
## Cross-Cultural Equity

America used to be referred to as a melting pot. More recently it's said to be more like a stew, with delightful ingredients mixing together in delicious family recipes, sharing tastes, textures, and flavors but retaining their own identities.

Palm Beach State College treasures people with different backgrounds, ethnicity, personal identity, skills, and ambitions; we recognize and celebrate those individualities in everything we do; and we provide the resources to ensure that each person has the opportunity to reach his or her personal goals.

At Palm Beach State and most other colleges and universities, Black and Hispanic students, especially males, complete college and earn a degree at significantly lower rates than their White and Asian counterparts. The overall graduation rate for Palm Beach State's first-time-in-college students is 41.8 percent, significantly higher than the national public, two-year college rate of 29.9 percent (two-year college rates are based upon three years). Community college rates are traditionally low, because a majority of students are balancing family and work responsibilities with school and hence take longer to graduate.

A closer look at graduation rates for different cultures in PBSC's student population reveals that Black and Hispanic male students lag behind.

This and other factors led Palm Beach State's President, Ava Parker, with community visionary, Dr. Barbara Carey-Shuler, to create the Cross-Cultural Equity Institute (CCEI), the first of its kind in the Florida College System, addressing issues around diversity, equity, and inclusion which are integral to Palm Beach State's legacy of transformation.

Dr. Carey-Shuler is a longtime south Florida educator and former elected official. After moving to Palm Beach County from Miami in 2006, she attended a presentation by President Parker. "It was an impassioned speech," she recalled, "about the need to help Black and Hispanic students stay in school and graduate." Dr. Carey-Shuler was inspired. "I called a good friend, the president of Florida A&M University, for advice. He said FAMU had the same problem – Black students dropping out, losing opportunities to advance themselves and their loved ones. Right then I knew I had to do something."

She called President Parker, and together they devised the development plan for CCEI. In addition to traditional college counseling services such as academic advising, the institute provides one-on-one tailored support in life coaching, peer mentoring, and personal

*"As a college and as a society, we need to create 'generational education' in our underprivileged communities. Too many of our young Black men and women come from households where survival, not education, is paramount. Without parents, grandparents, siblings, and friends to serve as role models, these young people are destined to repeat the cycle. To break it, Palm Beach State College will plan strategically to reach out and recruit them wherever they are, openly welcome and acknowledge them, then provide them with the necessary tools and resources to be successful."*

**DR. BARBARA CAREY-SHULER**

counseling, using data-driven research to determine overall best practices to increase retention and graduation. As part of the initiative, the Palm Beach State College Foundation will invest $50,000 to create an endowed scholarship in Dr. Carey-Shuler's name to support students served by the equity institute, with plans to grow the endowment in partnership with donors who share Dr. Carey-Shuler's passion.

In addition, the Institute will initiate research projects that provide equity-minded, data-informed solutions and projects that align with Palm Beach State's Panther Strong 2023 Strategic Plan, continuing the legacy of transformation of The Community's College.

Dr. Ava Parker & Dr. Barbara Carey-Shuler

# MEETING STUDENTS
## Where They Are

The seeds of a successful college education are often planted at the first contact. The transition from high school to college is difficult for most students – even more so for students who may be from disadvantaged neighborhoods and homes without the experience of higher education. Palm Beach State is forging stronger relationships with high schools in distressed neighborhoods, meeting students where they are, assisting them through the application process. Then, on their first day at Palm Beach State, welcoming them, letting them know they are appreciated, they are in their place.

*"Advancing equity and closing the graduation gap for Black and Hispanic students begins with recruiting while they are still in high school, encouraging dual enrollment, letting them know they are important to us, and that they have God-given gifts that we will help them grow. I do that with my restaurants, recruiting where they are, so that by the time they reach our door their self-esteem is at a high, they know they are wanted, and we will help them succeed."*

**RICKY WADE**
*Palm Beach State Board Member*
*McDonald's Franchisee*

## Cross-Cultural Literature Sees Beyond the Horizon to

# A NEW WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY

Literature is the path to understanding the world beyond one's vision. That's true for every student, but even more so for people from different cultures or those who may have been brought up in a home environment without higher education, without seeing real success in their peers, and where education is not a priority. Too often that is the world of culturally, economically, and socially deprived young people.

Cross-cultural literature is a touchstone for feelings across gender and ethnicity, a way to understand our history, a key to unlock our future. Literature bridges the gap between college "so I can get a job" and college "so I can see beyond the horizon."

*"African American literature adds context to our understanding of this country's problems. The 'why' behind the 'what.' We can't make meaningful progress until we understand that the seeds of our current problems were sown during the 17th century. Slavery worked because slaves were kept illiterate; when slaves began to read and write, the system broke down. My job is to educate students so they can break down barriers as well."*

**PROFESSOR AFRICA FINE**

# LEADING TO EQUITY
## For All Cultures

When Palm Beach Junior College was founded in 1933, its official seal included the phrase, *Sabiduría es Poder,* Spanish for "knowledge is power." Perhaps it was foresight that led its depression-era founders to forgo the traditional Latin and acknowledge the demographic shifts that would enrich the future population of the Florida peninsula with people from other cultures. Or, perhaps, it was an acknowledgment of Florida's heritage, having been a Spanish colony longer than it had been an American state. Whatever the reason, the original college seal remains on diplomas and other official documents today.

While the seal remained the same, the community and its college changed, reflecting multicultural growth and the embracing of diversity. Yet, while Palm Beach County demographics showed rapid growth in the number of Hispanic students enrolled in public K-12 schools, PBJC lagged behind.

The path forward evolved around a national initiative called Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), designed to encourage colleges to adopt a systematic, long-term effort to increase Hispanic enrollment to at least 25 percent of the total student population. In 2006, Dr. Maria Vallejo and Susy Martinez-White were appointed to lead efforts to obtain the HSI designation. Far from becoming just a plaque on the wall, HSI opened a gateway to increased federal funding, grants, and other opportunities that would benefit not just Hispanics, but all students.

When the initiative began, the college's Hispanic enrollment was 16.4 percent. By 2009, the institution was recognized by the Association of American Colleges and University's Excelencia In Education program for its successful efforts to improve retention and graduation through support services, accessible financial aid information, mentoring programs, diversity awareness, and cultural training focused on Hispanics, especially first-generation-in-college students.

> *"The biggest impact of HSI for the college as a whole is learning to connect the dots of community services and resources."*
>
> **SUSY MARTINEZ-WHITE**
> *Interim Director Early Childhood & K-12 PROGRAMS*

In 2014, after eight years of work, Palm Beach State achieved the HSI threshold of 25 percent Hispanic enrollment. And that's just the beginning. "Today," said Martinez-White, "Palm Beach State's Hispanic student graduation rates are higher than ever as a result of the influence and impact of the HSI initiative." In addition, the tools and techniques learned are now improving cross-cultural transformation across all our student populations, impacting the college as a whole.

# EXPANDING BOUNDARIES
## of Our Cross-Cultural Legacy

Understanding our cultural legacy also includes understanding our environmental legacy, on land and under the sea. Just offshore of Palm Beach County and the Caribbean homelands of many of our students, lives a beautiful, diverse aquatic world that is facing its own challenges.

Biodiversity and the evolutionary, ecological, and cultural processes that sustain life have long been a priority at Palm Beach State, and one of its newest multidisciplined initiatives is the Reef Hope Project led by Dr. Jessica Miles, Chair of the Environmental Science Department. Coral reefs around the world are under extreme stress due to climate change and other environmental impacts. Human activities increasing carbon dioxide emissions, inland water discharges, and increased acidity levels are impacting coral reefs and harming the shelled creatures and fish who rely on them for survival.

The Reef Hope Project places student-designed-and-built sculptural artificial reef elements at strategic sites near the Lake Worth Inlet. These structures will attract new coral growth and sea life; after three years they will be retrieved to be studied in Palm Beach State's labs with the goal of enhancing scientific knowledge and developing new programs to protect and rebuild coral reefs.

*"Coral reefs are like the rainforests of the sea. Without them, millions of species would not have homes and they would die."*

**LUZ CARRIZALEZ**
*Reef Hope Project Student*

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*"These are small structures – I think of them as mini-apartment buildings – that will be deployed for three years attracting all kinds of life. Then we will pull them back up and explore all the biodiversity on them, teaching students about taxonomy and about our local ecosystem and species that live here."*

**DR. JESSICA A. MILES**
*Environmental Science Professor*
*Reef Hope Project Leader*

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*"This is a big problem, and it will affect everyone. Even if you don't love the ocean or live by the ocean, it will affect you in some way, somehow. This is a worldwide problem. We all need to get together and do something about it."*

**STEPHANIE ROCHEFORT**
*Reef Hope Project Student*

# TRANSFORMING
## Academic Performance

Dr. Tunjarnika Coleman-Ferrell knows whereof she speaks when it comes to the legacy of transformation at Palm Beach State. A Riviera Beach native, she graduated from Palm Beach Gardens High School, then took summer classes at Palm Beach Junior College in 1990, before entering Washington and Jefferson College up north. Returning home for family obligations, she completed her bachelor's degree at Florida Atlantic University, augmenting her studies with classes at PBJC. Over the years she observed the transformation of the college as a cross-cultural institution; when she became a faculty member she championed it. Now, as Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs, her first focus was to ensure that the faculty mirrors the makeup of the student body and is specially trained and supported to listen to each student, learn where they are coming from, and lead them to success. This continuing transformation recognizes that students have their individual learning styles and that educators should have latitude to adjust to students' needs. She is thrilled that the new Dr. Barbara Carey-Shuler Cross-Cultural Equity Institute gives Palm Beach State unparalleled outreach and support resources.

Dr. Tunjarnika Coleman-Ferrell

*"The challenges in our classrooms are reflective of the challenges in our nation. African Americans and Hispanic Americans are struggling for equity at all levels. It is not a question of capability, it's a question of access to opportunity and the tools to succeed. In our societal microcosm of almost 47,000 students, Palm Beach State provides the opportunity and tools for success with faculty and staff that reflect the student body we serve. We've come a long way from classrooms full of chalk-and-talk to smartboards-and-laptops, but we never forget that each student is unique, coming to us with his or her own experiences, perspectives, hopes, dreams, and fears. That individual student is the center of our universe."*

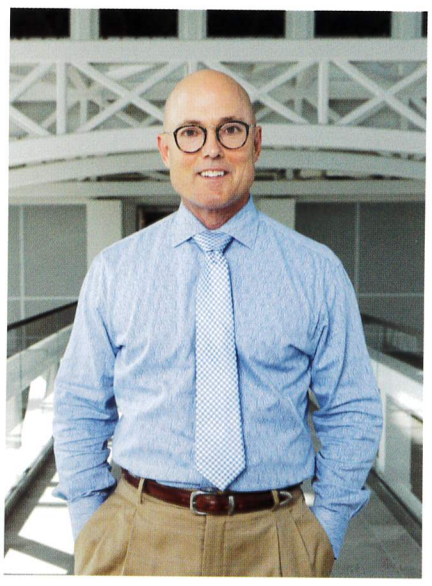
**DR. TUNJARNIKA (NIKA) COLEMAN-FERRELL**
*Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs*

#MakeItHappen
#InnovateToEducateWithExcellence
#PBSCtheCommunitysCollege

## Rich, Colorful

# CAMPUS LIFE

# REFLECTIONS ON
## The Community's College



**Lance C. Ivey, Esq.**
Palm Beach Community College
Class of 1989

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*The best spokespersons for Palm Beach State are its alumni. Their unique, personal, relatable experiences cut to the core of what makes the college special. We intend to feature an alum in each edition of the President's Report.*

*The first is Lance C. Ivey, member of the Palm Beach State College Foundation and an equity shareholder in the law firm of Lytal, Reiter, Smith, Ivey & Fronrath.*

### When did you attend the college?

I grew up in Palm Beach County, graduated from Twin Lakes High School in 1983. No one in my family had gone to college, and there was no expectation for me to go, so I joined the Army and became a paratrooper. Returning home after four years, my family anticipated I'd get a job or go to trade school. But I remember sitting on the beach one day, telling my best friend, John Howley, whose grandfather owned the famous local restaurant on South Dixie, that I was going to be a lawyer. College was so unrealistic for me that he even laughed. Then there were obstacles. I took the ACT exam but didn't do well. Four-year college was not in the cards – at least not then.

### What attracted you to Palm Beach Community College, as it was then known?

I grew up here. PBCC did too. I knew a lot of people who went there – they said good things about it. They made it easy to apply, but since I did so poorly on the ACT my first twelve credit hours were remedial – making up for the things I didn't learn in high school. That made the difference, turned my life around.

### How long did you attend?

While working fulltime, I graduated in two years.

### Did you earn a degree?

I'm proud to say I earned an AA degree and more. I was inducted into Phi Theta Kappa, the national honor society for community/junior colleges.

### What did you do after you left PBCC?

Phi Theta Kappa opened the door for me to attend University of Miami on a full academic scholarship, achieving an honors degree in economics. I then went on to St. Thomas School of Law where I earned my law degree.

### What were some of your fondest memories of your time at PBCC?

Compared to big universities, PBCC was a small, hometown institution. It was more like family. I would have been lost in a 300-person classroom. There was comradery between students and professors. They were accessible, wanted to help you succeed.

### What is one thing you'd like people to know about today's PBSC?

It can be a game changer for your future. It certainly turned my life around. President Parker is doing amazing things, placing new emphasis on existing programs, like Veteran Services. As a vet myself, I really appreciate what they are doing. I had a dream – Palm Beach State gave me the chance to make it real.

# PALM BEACH STATE COLLEGE

*Established 1936*

**BELLE GLADE CAMPUS**
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**BOCA RATON CAMPUS**
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**LOXAHATCHEE GROVES CAMPUS**
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